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UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 002714

SIPDIS

INL FOR TOM MARTIN AND AL MATANO
L FOR PATT PRUGH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA SIGNS INL LETTER OF AGREEMENT

REF: STATE 186187

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Foreign Minister Beilsa and Ambassador Gutierrez signed the first INL Letter of Agreement (LOA) since 1995. Post would like to express its appreciation to the INL and L Bureaus for their tremendous assistance in this process. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On September 17, Argentina's Foreign Minister Rafael Antonio Bielsa signed the first INL Letter of Agreement between the GOA and the United States since 1995. The agreement marks the end of years of often highly contentious on-again-off-again negotiations between Post and the Foreign Ministry's Office of Legal Affairs. For LOA text see reftel.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Eight months ago Post decided to revisit the LOA issue with the GOA, and developed an integrated country team approach to constructively engage the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on several levels. Both the Ambassador and the DCM repeatedly extolled the potential benefits of an LOA with a wide range of high-level contacts, and Post included LOA talking points for visiting CODELS and high level visitors to use whenever the issue of GOA assistance was broached. Pol, Econ, DEA and LEGATT representatives also routinely discussed the possible benefits of an LOA with their contacts, both within the Foreign Ministry and with interested host country entities such as the Justice Ministry, Gendarmeria, Aduanas, Federal Police, and SEDRANAR who stood to gain from an LOA agreement. This multi-front, multi-level country team approach succeeded in keeping the pressure on the MFA, and more specifically on the MFA's Legal Section, to reach an agreement. Combined with this mission-wide effort to keep the issue on the MFA's agenda, INL and L Bureaus both assisted greatly in keeping the LOA ball rolling by responding quickly to the GOA's questions and suggestions. The proactive and rapid response from INL, L and Post eliminated the MFA's favored method of deflecting pressure from other GOA entities, which was to claim that "they were awaiting a response from the Embassy."

[1](#)4. (SBU) Post believes the turning point in the negotiations was a Conference Call suggested by Post, and chaired by Tom Martin; with the participation of Patt Prugh from L, WHA Desk Officer Randy Fleitman, Embassy personnel and the head of the MFA Legal Section. During this conversation many of the traditional Argentine objections were overcome, and a road map was established that eventually led to an agreement.

GUTIERREZ